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SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE

There have been few reactions to the Washington Energy Conference in the past 24 hours. Most countries appear to be waiting for the final communiqué to be published.

USSR: Soviet media coverage yesterday was limited to a Moscow Radio Arabic-language broadcast. It described conference participants as increasingly appreciative of the Arab position on Israel and of "the danger of their subservience, in the question of obtaining oil, to the major international cartel, which is dominated by US monopolies." The Moscow broadcast painted a picture of US isolation and applauded Monday's nationalization move by Libya.

ITALY: Italian media are pessimistic about the outcome of the conference. La Stampa says the only agreement is that there should be a meeting among consumers, producers, and the third world. La Voce Repubblicana also comments that the only agreement is on the opportunity for extending talks to producer countries. La

Nazione says the American proposals deserve attention because the energy crisis is global and can be solved only by global initiatives and not bilateral agreements.

FRANCE: The leading French newspaper Le Monde emphasized yesterday inter-European differences and French isolation. In a front page report, economic analyst Philippe Simonnot comments that Jobert's efforts "to block the diplomatic machine set in place by Mr. Kissinger" was the main aspect of the first day of the conference. He adds that Jobert does not seem to attach great importance to European discord because the French believe they are saying out loud what other Europeans are thinking. "Nevertheless" he goes on, "France is visibly isolated" at Washington as the other nations are willing to satisfy "with diverse nuances" the desires of Mr. Kissinger. American irritation has been expressed, he says, in language which has particularly impressed the Germans while the British try to play the role of mediators.

In an editorial, Le Monde comments, "what is most surprising about the vocal outbursts now being heard in Washington, is that they still surprise." "The quarrel--which is more inter-European than European-American--has divided the community since its birth," the writer continues. "A total lack of hypocrisy must be accredited to Mr. Kissinger. Even before he was at the head of the State Department he did not conceal that the objective of his new Atlantic Charter was to integrate the US in the political decision process of the community... The Washington conference provides an ideal ground....Last week the Nine defined a common position; it smashed into pieces the first time Mr. Kissinger raised his eyebrows." Jobert's course of action even in isolation would be easier to justify if he were consistent. The editorial then laments France's leaving the joint float. "That Europe be European, that it try to find its independence, fine. But it can only reach this goal if governments, starting with the Paris government, accept a strict community discipline."

JAPAN: Press reports have highlighted France's opposition to the US position. Foreign Minister Ohira's speech at the conference has also received wide coverage, especially his call for an early meeting between oil consumers and producers, and his call for respecting the desire of oil consumers to conduct bilateral deals for oil.

EGYPT: Cairo Radio described factually the first day of the conference. The commentary noted Secretary Kissinger's proposals, including the formation of a coordination group to follow up the negotiations. It noted that France, which believes it is openly expressing what other Europeans are thinking, still hoped for another form of dialogue between Europe and the oil exporting states. The commentary concluded that the final communiqué would probably paper over the differences between France and the US.

LIBYA: Prime Minister Jallud speaking in Prague yesterday repeated that the nationalization of three American oil companies was intended to be his country's reply to the Washington meeting of oil consumers. Radio Tripoli continues to be outspoken in its criticism of the conference and warns "politicians who cooperate with the US that the Arab masses will not accept any decision taken against their will."

INDIA: Delhi International Radio broadcast a mildly worded commentary on February 11. Noting the conference was strictly limited to developed nations, it noted the lack of unity among the participants, especially between France and the US. It nevertheless said the nagging question remained whether a great power like the US would remain content with discussing generalities while its economy was in danger. It concluded that while there was a prospect for a confrontation, no one could tell the shape such a confrontation would take.

EASTERN EUROPE: Bloc countries have followed the Soviet lead. Coverage has been limited. Budapest Radio highlighted French Foreign Minister Jobert's rejection of "a joint stand to be taken under American hegemony" and added that other West European states also want to "retain a free hand."

Yugoslav media have criticized the conference as a restricted "club of the rich," but they have exercised some balance and restraint, reflecting Belgrade's efforts to avoid polemics with the US. The media continue to take the oil-producing states to task for raising prices developing nations must pay as well.